

seconds into overtime to help the Bulldogs win their first championship in school history by a score of 3-2 over the University of Michigan. The thrilling win culminated in a fantastic season for UMD's men's ice hockey team, with the Bulldogs amassing an impressive record of 26-10-6.

The NCAA hockey title win comes in the same academic year as the NCAA Division II football title for the Bulldogs, making the University of Minnesota-Duluth just the second college ever to win both a hockey title and a football title in the same academic year. Mr. Speaker, that's quite a feat.

I know I speak for the Eighth District and for all Minnesotans to say how proud we are of our Bulldogs. And it is great to have the NCAA championship trophy back in the State of Hockey, Minnesota.

KOREA FTA AND ITS EFFECTS ON WORKING PEOPLE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from California (Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. LINDA T. SÁNCHEZ of California. Mr. Speaker, I am pleased to rise this morning to address the House and the American people regarding the Korea Free Trade Agreement and its effect on working families.

Let me start by saying that I am committed to trade. Trade can benefit our Nation, our businesses, and our working families. In fact, I am a member of President Obama's Export Council. Our goal is to double American exports in 5 years, not to export American jobs.

But the problem with our current trade policy, the one that started with NAFTA and has gone downhill from there, is that its benefits are skewed. The benefits are concentrated in a few powerful multinational corporations, and it is hardworking middle class families who pay the price.

The Korea FTA doesn't fall far from the NAFTA tree. A few stock prices and CEO bonuses may go up, but the Korea FTA will kill jobs, push down American wages, and drive small American companies who face unfair competition out of business.

Perhaps the biggest problem with the Korea FTA is that it opens the door for more illegal trade from China. Members on both sides of the aisle and both sides of the FTA debate have concerns about trading with China. We all know that China manipulates its currency, doesn't protect intellectual property, and engages in illegal transshipment to escape U.S. tariffs. You can go on the Internet right now and find Web sites bragging that they can hide the source of Chinese goods and thereby avoid paying duties owed to the U.S.

The illegal transshipment, mislabeling, and duty evasion rob the American people of money that we are owed. They also drive U.S. businesses out of business. U.S. businesses often

go to great length and expense to prove that Chinese goods are being dumped and are receiving illegal subsidies. When the duties the U.S. imposes aren't paid, hardworking Americans lose their jobs when their workplaces shut their doors forever. From New York to South Carolina to Lynwood, California, in my own district, American businesses have turned off the lights and sent workers home due to unfair Chinese competition.

And China doesn't even have to break the rules to reap the benefits of the Korea FTA. This agreement, which was negotiated by President Bush, only requires that 35 percent of a Korean car be made in Korea to be eligible for tariff benefits. That means that 65 percent of the car can be made in China by child labor, prison labor, and workers who lack the right to form free and independent unions.

America has lost about 7.5 million jobs since the recession began. We cannot afford another job-killing trade agreement that ignores America's middle class families.

□ 1030

We have learned some very hard lessons after more than 15 years of NAFTA-style free trade agreements. We've heard many promises, just like the promises we're hearing about the Korea FTA. But the fact is that there are failures.

NAFTA was supposed to solve illegal immigration by developing a robust economy in Mexico that would allow hardworking people to provide for their families by staying home. That didn't work. CAFTA was supposed to include bold new safety and wage protections for workers, but these protections are disappointingly weak, allowing countries to downgrade their own labor laws. And in the Oman FTA, the administration actually negotiated a deal with a country that, as our own State Department reported, was experiencing a forced labor problem. Forced labor. How are our American families supposed to care for their families and send their kids to college when they are competing with forced labor?

Free trade was supposed to increase economic opportunity for everybody, for big businesses as well as small, and for hardworking families at home and abroad. This has not happened. Too many communities have been left to rot because corporations shut down U.S. plants to chase increasingly cheap labor and weak environmental standards abroad.

After 15 years of living with NAFTA and its clones, real wages for American families are down. Our trade deficit is in the tens of billions of dollars. Our manufacturing base is falling apart. The American worker is now more productive than before, but that increased productivity has not led to higher wages. The truth is the NAFTA free trade models favor the wealthiest few and the corporate fat cats at the expense of small businesses, workers, families, and our communities.

In the coming weeks and months we'll be asked to consider at least two of the Bush administration's trade deals with Korea and Colombia. Despite the long record of failed FTAs, we are going to hear that there is a consensus of support for these FTAs. We'll hear that anyone who knows anything about trade supports these agreements. Don't believe it, because it's not true. Advocates for America's families, both inside and outside of Congress, have grave concerns. We want a new path that creates real opportunities for workers and the businesses that employ them. We want trade agreements that don't sell our environment short, close doors for our children, or substitute the judgment of international trade lawyers for our courts.

Some of my colleagues say that the Korea FTA isn't that bad. That we can live with it.

That argument misses the point. Why are we settling for "not that bad"? We should be fighting for the best trade agreements possible.

NAFTA-style FTAs simply aren't good enough. We should focus on creating a trade policy that creates and saves well-paying jobs here in America.

Our trade policy should help small businesses hire more employees, not shut their doors.

It should help our trading partners to grow and flourish, not race to the bottom in labor and environmental standards.

Our trade policy should not reward bad actors like China, but reward playing by the rules.

If we stand united for working Americans, we can deliver a trade policy that accomplishes these goals.

Minor adjustments to NAFTA-style deals aren't good enough.

I urge my colleagues, on both sides of the aisle, to stop settling for "not that bad" and embark on a trade path that promotes development and prosperity for all.

TIME FOR AN AFGHANISTAN-PAKISTAN STUDY GROUP

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentleman from Virginia (Mr. WOLF) for 5 minutes.

Mr. WOLF. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to bring to the attention of the House legislation I am introducing to create an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group, modeled after the Iraq Study Group, to bring fresh eyes to the war effort in Afghanistan, which is now in its 10th year.

Last August, I began pressing the administration to convene an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group. While reticent at first, to their credit President Bush, Secretary of State Rice, and Defense Secretary Rumsfeld came to support the Iraq Study Group, ably led by bipartisan chairs, former Secretary of State James Baker and former Congressman Lee Hamilton.

It has been my hope that the Obama administration would come to view this bipartisan fresh eyes approach as something which is ultimately good for our men and women in uniform and

good for the country as a whole. Aside from the specific policy recommendations, the Iraq Study Group helped force a moment of truth in our national conversation about the war effort. It was apparent last summer and is still truer today that with roughly 100,000 U.S. troops presently in Afghanistan, no clear end is in sight to our Nation's longest running war, at 10 years and counting. Public support for the war is at an all-time low. A national conversation about Afghanistan is what is urgently needed.

Before proposing this idea to the Obama administration, I spoke with a number of knowledgeable individuals, including former senior diplomats, public policy experts, and retired and active duty military. Many believed, all believed our Afghanistan policy was adrift. And there was a near unanimous position that an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group was needed. Among the distinguished individuals who embraced the idea was former ambassador to Iraq Ryan Crocker.

Sadly, the war has remained distant for many Americans. It is rarely spoken of from the Presidential bully pulpit. In fact, a recent Fox News piece reported, "The last time Obama specifically devoted a full public speech to Afghanistan was December 9, 2009, 16 months ago, when he announced at West Point that he was sending an additional 30,000 U.S. troops to that war-torn country." And this Congress ought to be looking at this also.

Further, the war is seldom covered in great depth in the news. And yet, for the husbands and wives, and mothers and fathers, sons and daughters who have sent off a loved one in uniform, the war in Afghanistan is anything but distant. It is uncertainty and sacrifice, it is separation and worry, and many times it is life and death.

Despite my several letters to the President and other senior administration officials calling for a, quote, "vigorous, thoughtful, and principled debate and discussion among some of our Nation's greatest minds," the idea for the study group has languished.

So today, after the Obama administration has neglected this, I am introducing legislation to create an Afghanistan-Pakistan Study Group comprised of nationally known and respected individuals who love their country more than they love their political party, and who would, I believe, serve to provide much needed clarity to a policy that appears adrift at best, and highly politicized at worst.

In reading "Obama's Wars," I was deeply troubled by Bob Woodward's reporting, which indicated that discussions of the war strategy were infused with political calculations. Woodward also wrote of an administration that wrestled with the most basic questions about the war: What is the mission? What are we trying to do? What will work? These are questions that demand answers. I believe that Americans of all political viewpoints can embrace this

fresh eyes approach, for it is always to our national interest to openly assess the challenges before us and to chart a clear course to success.

I urge my colleagues to join me in support of this legislation. This Congress, both political parties, cannot do what this administration is doing. We cannot ignore this issue.

HOW GOP BUDGET IMPACTS SENIORS

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Pennsylvania (Ms. SCHWARTZ) for 5 minutes.

Ms. SCHWARTZ. For decades, Medicare has been a lifeline for older Americans, providing quality and affordable health care for all seniors. But this week House Republicans are proposing to strip seniors of this guaranteed benefit. The Republican budget proposal dismantles Medicare as we know it, telling seniors they are going to be on their own to find insurance no matter what the cost or how sick they are. And it slashes Medicaid coverage for seniors who need long-term care, threatening our sickest, most frail elderly in nursing homes with no care at all. This is absolutely the wrong approach to solving our Nation's budget problems.

Every day, 48 million elderly and disabled Americans across this country count on Medicare for their life-saving medications, doctor visits, and hospital care. Sixty-nine percent of people over the age of 65, and they are both Democrats and Republicans, oppose Medicare becoming a voucher program. Seniors know that changing Medicare to a voucher program means that they will no longer have access to a guaranteed set of health benefits, that the value of a limited voucher won't keep up with rising health care costs, that the voucher would become insufficient over time, and the care they need could become unaffordable, that too many taxpayer dollars will be spent on advertising campaigns and administrative costs instead of actual medical expenses.

And seniors know that privatizing Medicare means limits on benefits, obstacles to care, uncertain reimbursements, copayments for primary care or specialty care, exclusions for certain services, discrimination based on income, illness, or age, and more uncertainty if a serious illness or need for long-term care occurs. Seniors know that privatizing or voucherizing Medicare will mean that they pay more in premiums or do without. And it doesn't end there.

In addition to Medicare cuts, Republicans also want to take away Medicaid for the nearly 6 million seniors who depend on it for nursing home or long-term care. They say proudly that they will cut funding to States by \$1 trillion. This means that disabled and frail elderly Americans will be placed on waiting lists for services or have no access to care at all.

□ 1040

In Pennsylvania, my home State, nearly 40 percent of funds spent on long-term care would be at risk. This includes 62 percent of nursing home residents and 25,000 Pennsylvanian seniors who receive home health services.

And yet when Republicans had the opportunity to reduce costs while maintaining and strengthening care for our seniors, they demonized the plan, voting time and again to stop important improvements in Medicare. And they still want to repeal the law that eliminates copayments for preventive care services, that makes prescription drug benefits more affordable and improves coordination of care and health outcomes, reduces errors and reduces costs for seniors.

They want to repeal the law that curbs the growth in Medicare spending, saves taxpayers almost \$500 billion by ending overpayments to insurance companies, and extends the life of the Medicare Trust Fund for 12 years. Instead, the Republicans here in Washington want to end Medicare as we know it and put health care for American seniors at great risk.

As a senior member of the Budget Committee, I know how important it is to find solutions to reducing the deficit. To do this right, the solution must include spending cuts, tax policy reform, and economic growth.

We should not fix our budget problems by failing to meet our obligations to our seniors. Every day we hear how determined Republicans are to slash billions of dollars from the central programs because we simply can't afford it. They say we can't afford to make investments in the future. We can't afford to educate our children or fix our roads or fuel innovation or cover health care costs for seniors.

Yet in the same proposal to slash Medicare and Medicaid for millions of seniors, Republicans make permanent tax cuts for the wealthiest 2 percent of Americans. In the very same budget proposal where Republicans take away guaranteed benefits for seniors, they protect billions of tax subsidies to the oil and gas industry.

In the very same budget proposal where Republicans give seniors a limited voucher to pay for higher insurance premiums, they protect the Pentagon from spending cuts on unnecessary weapon systems.

One trillion dollars in tax expenditures, \$700 billion in tax cuts for the wealthy few, \$40 billion in tax breaks for oil companies, and billions of dollars to continue inefficiencies at the Pentagon—all of this spending is protected by the Republican budget. And instead, they choose to slash benefits to our seniors and our disabled Americans.

Budgets are about priorities and they're about our values. Yes, we should get serious about our Nation's deficit, but let's be sure that our priorities are right and we do not threaten our obligations to our seniors, to our children, or to America's future.